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Jackson disputes Soviet sub count

By CHARLES W. CORDDRY
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Washington—Senator Henry M. Jackson (D., Wash.) said yesterday that Russian officials lied to American arms-control negotiators about the size of their submarine force in order to get a more favorable deal in the five-year missile agreement.

Mr. Jackson's assertion to newsmen brought an immediate retort from Senator J. W. Fulbright (D., Ark.), Foreign Relations Committee chairman, who said on the Senate floor that the Washingtonian's charge raised questions as to whether he was out "to sabotage approval" of the missile pact.

The Senate continued to be so bogged down in controversy over when to vote on amendments proposed by Mr. Jackson and others that a vote on the agreement was increasingly improbable until after the two-week recess starting at the end of this week.

Senator Jackson told reporters the Russians claimed to American negotiators that they had 48 missile-carrying submarines in being or under construction when, in truth, they had 42.

"We now know from intelligence sources they didn't have 48," the senator said. Each of the submarines in question carries 16 ballistic missiles. Mr. Jackson said the Soviets' reason for giving the larger figure was to create an impression of greater momentum in sub construction and thus get a higher ceiling on the numbers allowed them under the agreement.

The five-year agreement limits the Soviets to 62 missile subs, while the United States limit is put at 44. Jackson aides contended the Russian limit might have been lower had the base figure of 42 been used instead of 48.

Mr. Fulbright told the Senate he would have the Foreign Relations Committee staff check with the Central Intelligence Agency about Mr. Jackson's "serious charge." He said he hoped President Nixon would "explain, deny or reconcile" the matter.

Well-informed sources in the executive branch bore out Senator Jackson's statement about numbers of Soviet subs without judging whether lying was involved.

As negotiators got down to the wire last May 26 when, Mr. Nixon and Leonid I. Brezhnev, Communist party chief, were to sign the arms pacts, these sources said, the important point was to get a ceiling on Soviet subs that Americans could accept. In the last-minute compromising, the figure 62 was agreed upon.

American negotiators had been "suspicious" for some time, the sources further said, that their Soviet counterparts were not fully informed on the minute details of their country's weapons programs. Moreover, they would hold back on some details in any case, in order not to verify to Americans, the accuracy of American intelligence gathering.

Also, Soviet officials might

count as "under construction" submarines for which subsystems were being built although the submarines themselves were not yet being assembled.

The Jackson claims and Fulbright retorts enlivened what otherwise was another day of debate in an almost empty Senate chamber, as the Senate's leaders tried futilely to work out agreements for voting on the pact and proposed amendments—the most controversial of which is Mr. Jackson's demand for "equality" with the Russians in the next round of negotiation on offensive weapons.

Senator Hugh Scott (Pa.), the Republican leader, told reporters that the "big bulls of the Senate" were "knee-deep in intransigence—very sticky stuff" and if they kept on behaving as they were they might "jeopardize any vote at all." He did not think that would keep the next round from getting under way, however.

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Jackson Claims Russians Lied On Submarines

By Jack Fuller
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Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) yesterday charged that the Soviet Union lied to the United States during arms limitation talks by overstating the number of modern, ballistic-missile-carrying submarines it had deployed or under construction. But Jackson's staff, "clarifying" his remarks later, noted that the two nations had disagreed throughout the talks as to the Soviets' submarine strength.

Jackson told reporters that the Soviet Union claimed to have 48 Yankee Class submarines, while "firm intelligence" puts its strength at only 42. He claimed that the Soviets used the inflated number to deceive the United States about their submarine force momentum. Under the interim offensive weapons agreement Russia is allowed 62 modern ballistic submarines and the United States 44.

A member of Jackson's staff, circulating in the press gallery to "clarify" the senator's remarks, said the Soviet Union's misstatement gave them an artificially high position from which to bargain in the talks.

The staffer said the United States consistently put the number of Russian submarines lower than the Moscow negotiators did. During the Moscow talks, Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, remarked at a press conference that the two sides disagreed over the definition of "under construction."

He noted that a submarine hull is built in sections, and the sections then are assembled in a shed.

The Russians, Kissinger said, "may count the hull sections, and we count them when they enter the shed."

Jackson's charge came as the Senate became firmly mired

in a dispute about how and when to end debate on amendments to the offensive weapons agreement. The House Rules Committee, however, cleared the agreement for debate today and a possible vote.

"We're knee deep in intransigence now, and it's very sticky stuff," said Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.)

The opposing Senate forces met twice in unsuccessful attempts to set a time for a vote.

Scott predicted that debate on the amendments to the agreement would drag on past the Senate's recess Friday for the Republican National Convention. This could delay the start of the second round of U.S.-Soviet arms negotiations, Scott said.

The Jackson amendment would urge the President to seek "equality" of offensive missiles in the second round of bargaining.

Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and one of the Jackson amendment's leading opponents, said Jackson's charge that the Russians lied during the arms talks "raises very serious questions" about "whether he is really trying to sabotage this measure."

Jackson's charge, Fulbright said, on the Senate floor, "stirs up latent chauvinism and mistrust of the Soviets." He said he would ask the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee to inquire of the Central Intelligence Agency about the validity of the charge.

Scott said the Jackson charge is "not helpful" to Senate discussions of the offensive weapons agreement. He added that he did not think it would change any senator's vote.

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